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My Note Book.

Leonato.—Are these things spoken, or do I but dream?
Don John.—Sir, they are spoken, and these things are true.
—Much Ado About Nothing.



R. COMSTOCK, facetiously dubbed "Saint," by virtue of his given name, seems to be in a fair way to become a martyr also. The brutality of some of the newspaper attacks upon the agent for the Society for the Prevention of Vice is producing a reaction in his favor. From being what might be called a one-sided controversy, the discussion growing out of his seizure of certain photographs and other prints found in the stock of Messrs. Knoedler & Co., on the ground that they are obscene, has brought out "the other side" of the question for the first time; not, indeed, from Mr. Anthony Comstock or from his Society—whose policy would really seem to be to keep the dealers in the dark as to what pictures of nudity would be held to be objectionable, and then, catching them napping, pounce down upon them and drag them before the courts—but from private individuals, whose opinions have been expressed in the newspapers. The clergy have kept curiously aloof from the discussion, although Mr. Comstock might naturally have looked in the direction of the churches for some one to hold up his hands in the work of a Savonarola restraining licentiousness in the guise of art. For my own part, I admit that, in view of all that I have heard lately of the good work done by the Society for the Prevention of Vice, through its agent, I have decidedly modified my opinion concerning him personally. I am satisfied that Mr. Comstock is an honest, public-spirited man, who, contrary to general report, works solely on a salary, and receives no part of the rewards proceeding from his seizures.

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THAT he makes serious mistakes there can be no reasonable doubt. These seem to be due, in the first place, to the unwillingness or inability of the Society to define what pictures will be deemed objectionable under the law, and, secondly, to leaving the determination of so delicate a matter to the individual discretion of an agent who has neither the training nor natural aptitude to fit him for the office of art censor. It is easy enough to proceed against such wretches as he has sent to prison for trafficking, through newspapers and other periodicals, in improper books and pictures, especially designed to corrupt the youth of the country. It is something very different to take the responsibility of seizing part of the stock of a firm of the standing of Knoedler & Co., and declaring that it consists of obscene pictures. It must be admitted, though, in all fairness, that, as yet, it has not been authoritatively stated what particular prints were seized in this case, the trial of which has been postponed, and very likely will not come off at all.

* * *

IT has been urged that some of the prints seized were those of paintings from the Paris Salon. That says little for their decency. Let us hope that Parisian toleration of lewdness under the guise of art will never set the standard of decency in this country. Every year there are canvases by the score in the Salon which should be taken out and burned by the police; and, as a rule, the worst of them are photographed and imported into this country to be reproduced in cheaper form, so that your little boy or your little girl can buy them out of their pocket-money if they choose to do so. I dare say some of them are painted chiefly with the view of profit from the copyright. The idea that in this photographic form they can serve any legitimate purpose of art every artist knows to be absurd. The painting of the original may have done so in a degree, because it may have helped the technical education of the painter—and more is the pity that the wretched fellow does not put his education to better use—and, with all its shamefacedness, the contemplation of the picture may have given æsthetic pleasure to the visitor at the Salon, by the beauty of the modelling and the delicacy of the coloring—supposing it to possess those charms. But, reduced to the uncompromising black and white of the photographic print, it becomes something wholly different, and has nothing to recommend it on the score of art.

MOREOVER, its cheapness makes it dangerous; and in this, I think, we have something like a key to the proceedings against Messrs. Knoedler & Co. I have it on good authority that while Mr. Comstock would not formulate the distinction that would guide him in determining what prints of the nude those dealers might and what they might not sell, he indicated it pretty clearly, on the occasion of his official visit, by passing by high-priced etchings and engravings and seizing prints of the same subjects in a cheaper form. Anything costing \$10 or more was safe from seizure. If he found any of Gervex's nastinesses—such as the woman with a mask, for instance—he would have been justified, I fancy, in confiscating them, no matter what the form or price; but if, as was reported to be the case, he seized the small photographs of so chaste a picture as Cabanel's "Birth of Venus," it seems to me that he found something objectionable which should not appear to be so to any pure-minded person. But who shall define these nice distinctions between one nude picture and another? Certainly it cannot be done by statute. Might it not be left, as suggested by a correspondent of The Evening Post, to a board of art censors, composed of artists and recognized art connoisseurs whose good judgment and disinterestedness no one would impugn?

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TOBY ROSENTHAL'S "Elaine" continues to draw many visitors at the place of exhibition in Fourteenth Street. Among those I saw there, the day before the revival at the Madison Square Theatre of Messrs. Lathrop and Edwards's charming dramatization of Tennyson's poem of that name, were two of the stage artists, who were closely studying the details of the picture, which are reproduced with wonderful fidelity in the last act, when the funeral barge bearing the "the Lily Maid of Astalot," steered by the dumb servitor, appears in the gray morn at King Arthur's palace. The painting, executed as it was, many years ago, under the very eye of Piloty, is interesting to study in connection with Toby Rosenthal's large picture of recent date, "The Dancing Lesson," now at Knoedler's, in which there is hardly a trace of his early master's influence. In the "Elaine" there is an absence of color, giving almost the effect of monochrome; in "The Dancing Lesson" there is abundance of color, but no tone; while in a third picture by Rosenthal, in the Knoedler gallery—"The Vacant Chair," a touching bit of genre—there are both color and tone to a degree rarely given by his brush.

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AN original and at the same time artistic conception of the Madonna and Child is hardly to be looked for in this nineteenth century, and least of all, perhaps, in the work of a Frenchman. Yet a striking picture fulfilling these conditions is to be seen at the newly-opened rooms of Boussod, Valladon & Co., in Fifth Avenue. The artist is Dagnan-Bouveret—or Dagnan, as he signs himself now—whose masterpiece, "Un Accident," is in Baltimore, in the Walters collection. He has chosen as his model for the Virgin a young peasant, distinctly stamped as such by the coarseness of her hands and her unrefined although not unattractive features. Rudely clad, she sits by a very conventional-looking table, upon which is a no less conventional vase of roses. Her black veil falls upon the Holy Child in her arms, concealing his face completely, but the outline of the head is distinguishable beneath the folds, by means of a brilliant halo, which bursts through, and, like a conflagration, lights up the whole picture. The stolid-looking mother, presumably, is wholly unconscious of the divine nature of the Infant.

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THAT talented sculptor, Theodore Bauer, has just completed a delightful little clay model he calls "The Wave." It is the nude figure of a maiden lying indolently, half recumbent, on the sand, as the water dashes over her. One hand with part of the arm is hidden by the wave, which is artistically contrived to break the outline of the body without concealing too much of the charming girlish contour. The back of the figure is exquisitely modelled. I am glad to learn that Mr. Bauer intends to publish this graceful little work.

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THE second exhibition of pictures in the art gallery at the Eden Musée is a decided improvement on that noticed last month. The new pictures are chiefly by Americans, the most notable being the four contributed by William M. Chase, who seems to be "going in" exclusively for landscapes just now, a departure one can-

not regret, so long as he gives such charming, sparkling bits of out-door life as he has been painting in and about Brooklyn. The scene on a summer day in Tompkins Park, with the figures of a lady and child admirably introduced, is brilliantly executed and is full of atmosphere; and certainly no less can be said of the view of the Church of the Puritans by early morning light—a most difficult effect very well managed. Other excellent landscapes are contributed by H. Bolton Jones, W. A. Coffin, D. W. Tryon, R. C. Minor, C. H. Davis, J. F. Murphy, and J. H. Twachtman, and there is a characteristic little Courbet, with a fleeing deer introduced. H. Siddons Mowbray sends "A Studio Corner," with a painter and his well-favored model at breakfast; Francis C. Jones "A Figure" of a pretty girl arranging flowers, and there are good figure subjects by Irving R. Wiles, J. Wells Champney, and others.

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AN interesting lawsuit, growing out of the great book sale in New York last spring, is brewing, in which Mr. Henri Pène Du Bois will appear, as claimant for heavy damages, against Leavitt & Sons, the auctioneers, who, he alleges, severely injured his reputation by "stuffing" the sale with numerous additions from the stocks of various booksellers and others—among these "others" being no less a person than the bibliophile, Mr. Robert Hoe, Jr., who contributed the Aldus series in the catalogue, and bid them in, because they did not bring enough. Mr. Du Bois declares that all this disreputable business, for which he has had to stand the blame, was done without his consent, the catalogue, indeed, having been prepared during his absence in Europe. The trial promises some curious revelations concerning the business methods of certain auctioneers—and others.

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OF the various "individual" exhibitions in New York at present, perhaps none has so little excuse for being as that of Makart's "Five Senses," a series of simply sensual pictures, the display of which can serve absolutely no artistic purpose.

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PERHAPS no better service has been done for the cause of American art than by the monthly exhibitions at the Union League Club in this city. The juxtaposition there of American pictures with those by the best European artists of the day has frequently shown how well *our* best men can hold their own if given a fair chance. Yet a very few years ago, collectors who, visiting the club, now admit this to be true, would have scouted the idea of hanging any but "imported" paintings in their own houses. The lesson thus taught, by ocular demonstration, has been the means of selling hundreds of pictures every year out of the studios of our artists, who should not forget what they owe to the liberal, broad-minded management of this noted social organization. At the December exhibition, the Union League Club went still further, the pictures this time being exclusively American. The result, on the whole, must have been very gratifying; for while the general effect was doubtless less decorative than it would have been had there been the usual admixture of foreign canvases, the prevailing grayness of the mass was more than atoned for by the excellence of many of the pictures. In figure painting and portraiture there was little that was noticeable; representative men, indeed, like Winslow Homer, Albert Thayer, E. A. Abbey, Frank Millet, Eastman Johnson, and Kenyon Cox being unrepresented. In landscape, however, there was much good work, sincerely American, showing in many cases genuine feeling for nature. Such were "A Valley View" by George Inness, "A Pasture" by D. W. Tyron, "The Chepuxit River" by Van Boskerck, "Landscape" by A. H. Wyant, "Early Moonrise" by W. A. Coffin, "November" by Bruce Crane, and "A Summer Afternoon" by C. H. Davis. Albert Bierstadt's coarse painting of disporting seals on "Farallon Island" and F. E. Church's gaudy "Tropical Landscape" were interesting as examples of the dreadful things which were considered good art less than a generation ago.

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Now that Boussod, Valladon & Co., who succeeded Goupil in Paris and until recently represented Knoedler in that city, have established themselves in New York, we have pretty nearly every important art dealer in the French capital represented here with a branch establishment. Arnold and Tripp, doubtless, may be looked for in due season. I am told on good authority, by the way, that Agnew, the famous London dealer, thinks

seriously of opening a New York branch. It is doubtful, though, that English pictures will ever find a regular market in this country. The productions of the few painters, like Leighton, Millais, and Alma-Tadema, whose work is esteemed here, are sold every year before they leave the easel, and at such fabulous prices that probably no dealer in this country could make money by handling them. As for such English favorites as Edwin Long, Frederick Goodall, Val Prinsep, and John Collier, their pictures could never become popular here, no matter at what figures they might be offered.

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THE recent sale at Paris of the pictures and "objets d'art" of the late Raymond Cahuzac brought \$35,754. Amaury Duval's idyllic "Daphnis and Chloé" brought only \$101; Hippolyte Bellangé's "Depart pour la noce," an Alsatian scene, \$130; Jules Breton's "Gardeuse de dindons," \$5,023; a "Danse de Nymphes," by Corot—landscape with figures, sunset effect—\$5,600, and Delacroix's "Mort de Botzaris," \$500.

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THE artist Deschamps writes to the Paris Journal des Arts suggesting prizes to painters to be offered respectively by the principal historical, literary, and horticultural societies. The award by the Historical Society, he thinks, should be for the best picture of a subject drawn from the history of France; that the competitors for the prize to be offered by the Literary Society shall choose a subject illustrating French literature, and that the most beautiful flower-painting should take the prize of the Horticultural Society. He further proposes a "Press prize," to be awarded by "the art critics." There ought to be some fun extracted from this last suggestion.

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THE prettiest model in Paris to-day is Alice Van—, daughter of a Belgian violinist, who died when she was about fourteen, and left her to make her own living, and that of her family. She posed for Henner's "Fabiola"—reproduced in this country as a tobacconist's advertisement—"Orpheline" and "Hérodade." Another model in vogue at present is a Viennese girl named Hedwige, who has blond hair with golden reflections, and a form like an antique statue. Honorine P— is a pretty girl of seventeen, much in demand among painters because of her profile of an extreme purity of line, and of the unusually pleasing tonality of her flesh tints. Gabrielle André is the model in fashion for the Parisienne types. She knows every movement and gesture of the women of both "mondes."

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AT the recent sale in Paris of the collections of the late Jacquinet, an expert in paintings, two thousand pictures—six hundred of them framed—and a hundred and ten thousand prints brought only about \$22,000. The prints went for about \$2400—about two cents apiece. Autographs of celebrated artists brought much better prices, as follows:

Bastien Lepage, 10 fr.; Baudry, 11 fr.; H. Bellangé, 11 fr.; Van Blarenbergh, 105 fr.; Boilly, 17 fr.; de Boissieu, 72 fr.; Rosa Bonheur, 7 fr. 50; Carpeaux, 25 fr.; P. de Champagne, 100 fr.; Charlet, 16 fr.; Cochin, 40 fr.; Couture, 7 fr. 50; Coypel, 6 fr.; Daubigny, 23 fr.; Daumier, 40 fr.; David, 101 fr.; David d'Angers, 15 fr.; Decamps, 6 fr.; Delacroix, 32 fr.; Delaroche, 12 fr.; Diaz, 10 fr.; G. Doré, 6 fr.; J. Dupré, 18 fr.; Flandrin, 13 fr.; Fragonard, 160 fr.; Français, 6 fr.; Fromentin, 13 fr.; Géricault, 100 fr.; Gravelot, 73 fr.; Greuze, 60 fr.; Baron Gros, 105 fr.

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VOLLON seems satisfied, as well he may, to rest his reputation on his wonderful pictures of still-life. But what stunning things he might do outside of that somewhat limited range of subject, if he only cared to paint them, is suggested in a little view of Mentiques, a suburb of Versailles, which for months has been at Kohn's art rooms without finding a buyer. The canvas, or panel—I did not notice which it was—apparently has been painted entirely with the handle of the brush and the thumb-nail. The sketch evidently was dashed off in a hurry, and, except at a distance, is meaningless. Seen from the proper point of view, it is marvellous.

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THE news that Meissonier has been stricken with paralysis in his right thumb will be received with deep regret in this country, where his name is so much honored and his work so much esteemed. It is consoling to learn that the doctors believe that the attack is only transient.

MONTEZUMA.

BUREAU OF ART CRITICISM AND INFORMATION.

THE Art Amateur has decided, in response to urgent demands from many subscribers, to establish a department where drawings, paintings, and other works of art will be received for criticism. A moderate fee will be charged, for which a personal letter—not a circular—will be sent, answering questions in detail; giving criticism, instruction, or advice, as may be required, in regard to the special subject in hand.

It is the intention of The Art Amateur to make this department a trustworthy bureau of expert criticism, and so supply a long-felt want, as there is now no one place in this country where disinterested expert opinion can be had on all subjects pertaining to art.

Amateurs and artists' work will be received for criticism, from the simplest sketches or designs up to finished paintings in oil, water-colors, and pastel. Old and new paintings and objects of art of all kinds will be not only criticised, but classified and valued, if desired, at current market prices.

SCALE OF CHARGES:

Price for criticism of single drawings.....\$3.00
For each additional one in the same lot..... 1.00
Price for criticism of single painting (either oil or water-colors)..... 4.00
Each additional painting in the same lot..... 1.00
N. B.—No more than six paintings are to be sent at one time.
All risks must be assumed and all transportation charges must be paid by the senders.
Drawings and unmounted paintings may be sent by mail, rolled on a cylinder.

All fees must be paid in advance.

More complete details as to the fees for opinions regarding old and modern paintings and other objects of art will be given upon application to the editor of The Art Amateur. In writing a stamp should be enclosed.

ART IN BOSTON.

AN exhibition of a score of large water-color landscapes of the elegant but rather formal old English school forms the touching memorial of the late Mr. T. F. Wainwright, an English painter of position in London, who, two or three years ago, drifted to Boston too late in life for such a change, and died here last summer. There is everything in these pictures demanded by the canons of art as laid down by the English preachers and practitioners—balance of composition, grace of line, pleasantness of subject, correctness of drawing, and depth of aerial perspective. There are also sweetness of color, though this color be largely conventional, and tenderness of sentiment—a delicate, unobtrusive pastoral poetry. But the groups of cattle are often alike, and so admirably composed with the picture that they betray the recipe; and there is always one cow making a symmetrical pyramid of its group, with a head and neck curved and stretched forth in a certain manner. Yet one cannot but regard this faithful, self-respecting art with admiration and respect, not unmixed with tenderness. One is not sorry to turn from the smart and flippant contemporary portrayals of back yards and cabbage gardens to the grandiose landscapes of wide English plains and bold sea-coasts of exalted intrinsic beauty, especially when, as in the case of Mr. Wainwright's drawing, the accuracy of line is blended sweetly with the air and light in the picture.

What is less easily accepted is the color of this fine old English school. How differently the modern French landscape school sees the color of England is shown in striking contrast in the exhibition, held almost side by side with that of the Wainwright water-colors, of the pastels of J. Appleton Brown. This New England pupil of the Ville d'Avray Frenchmen has spent a summer in Old England, and here we have a series of sweet nooks and corners of fat fields, of mill-ponds, and of wooded paths. Where the old English painter has given us a prismatic coloring, with prevalent yellow and high notes of violet, the young American has seen nothing but green—at least, nothing prevalent and dominant but green. His green is of all varying degrees of key, and of such delicate suggestiveness and truth that it tells at once what time of the season is represented, from that of earliest spring to that of rich midsummer. Nothing could be more exquisite than a light-green picture, with white lambs in the grass, and the white mist of blossoms enveloping the trees. Nothing could be more luxurious than a dark green bit of lawn under old trees, with an easy-chair inviting to rest and coolness in the

heavy shade. Yet Brown revels in color through the whole prism when he comes to autumn foliage and fields or twilight effects. In two pictures of the wild island garden of Celia Thaxter, the poet, he introduces tall hollyhocks and other blossoming flowers in a perfect riot of tangled gayety of color against a light-blue sea and sky. Yet all his pictures are delicately harmonized as to both color and composition in a certain sweet, disorder-concealing art, a studied negligence of rule and prescription that piques, and fascinates, and charms.

Not so with the green things of Mr. Edward C. Cabot, which are also being exhibited just now in still another gallery. There is a crudeness about his cold green that makes one long even for the parchment tones of the mellow old English pictures. Very little grace or sweetness of composition either mingles with his delineations of New England scenery. Prosaic literalness and coarse detail are so little tempered with skill in gradating the "values" that the effect is often simply confusing as well as ungracious. Appleton Brown is only apparently indifferent to choice of subject and execution; Mr. Cabot, in his sixty odd pictures, seems very rarely to have known how to select his point of view or to carry his work to pleasing effect. While Mr. Brown's carefully unconventional style always interests and delights, Mr. Cabot's slap-dash simply leaves the impression of misdirected energy.

That cleverest of our impressionist water-colorists, Mr. Boit, whose marvellous pictures of Paris streets, with their myriads of moving figures—notably that one in which the Arc de Triomphe forms the centre—are well known, is at work upon some similar studies of Boston vistas. One of these was exhibited last year, showing the Public Garden and Common in their winter aspect, with every branch and twig, as it seemed, delineated in quick stabs and magical touches, and the gilded dome of the State House in the distance. At present he is studying the Common and State House from the opposite side, with a crowded, bustling street for foreground, and the gilt, balloon-like dome at nearer view. If he succeeds in giving the mass of this fine, characteristic object, so dear to Bostonians, as well as he did with the mass of the Arc de Triomphe, he will have achieved a picture that will be very precious to all worshippers of the "Hub."

Mr. W. L. Picknell, who belongs as much nowadays to London as to Boston, is back in town from Gloucester and Annisquam with his summer's work, which he is about to exhibit before taking it to England. His most important picture is a wide sketch of the gloomy, low-lying scenery of Cape Ann, rich in sombre coloring and in rugged truth to melancholy facts. The sky is a wonder of spaciousness and power—painted, after weeks of waiting for just the right gray day, in a few hours, the painter working by main strength, while assistants squeezed his white tubes for him. It is a dense yet moving mass of cloud, such as comes up on an east wind, and gives the diffused light under which the great landscape was painted. Others of the four or five canvases which constitute the season's work are more lively and pleasing, especially one showing the white houses of the region set in the green and rocky pastures bordering the little salt creek called the Annisquam River, and one picturing a fisherman in brown overalls sculling his boat in the transparent sea water, a marvel of minute realism in painting.

Another Boston artist who never comes home from London is Mr. Aubrey Hunt, son of a manufacturer of fireworks and inventor of a life-saving-service gun. Young Hunt began his studies with an architect in Boston, but soon transferred them to Paris, and there, in the course of four years, developed into an artist. The latest received Saturday Review devotes a half column to his collection of thirty or forty pictures at the Goupil Galleries, commending them as "showing other resources of the art of oil painting than those which have been relied upon habitually by English artists. . . . The kind of view of nature which he takes is especially suitable for treatment in a sketch, and Mr. Aubrey Hunt shows how, by elegance, quickness, and consistency, handling may be made to give to a sketch all the completeness and art necessary to a little picture. . . . Mr. Hunt's canvases illustrate the modern growth of the sketch-picture, and that he neither strives after an exquisite preciousness of elaboration nor falls into the unkempt and unintentional ruggedness of the sketch." Evidently Mr. Hunt is "de son temps" and a worthy colleague of the brilliant younger Americans. Unhappily he is not expected to return to Boston.

GRETA.